APRIL 23, 2004

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Executive Notes

Your Provincial Executive Council met in St. John's on **April 23**. This issue of Executive Notes is a summary of major decisions and discussions that occurred at this meeting.

For further information contact any member of Provincial Executive or the staff person as indicated.

Association Priorities
Provincial Executive reviewed the Priorities Document and was updated by Administrative Staff on various elements of the document. The five priorities are: negotiating a collective agreement; teacher accountability/assessment/professionalism; curriculum issues; quality of teachers' work life; and membership awareness.

For further information contact Fred Douglas, President, or Edward Hancock, Executive Director.

Collective Bargaining
The Negotiating Team will meet on May 14 to give further consideration to the negotiations climate and the NLTA's strategy, and to re-examine the opening proposals in light of recent government decisions regarding teacher allocations and school district consolidation. There will be further discussion at the June meeting of Provincial Executive.

For further information contact Fred Douglas, President, or Lloyd Hobbs, Assistant Executive Director.

Business from Standing Committees
TABLE OFFICERS

- The NLTA will request that government reconsider its decision re non-participation in the multi-lateral pension transfer agreement.
- The NLTA will request legislative changes to the Teachers' Pensions Act to allow direct plan-to-plan transfer of service using commuted value as a basis for purchase; to remove the age sixty mandatory retirement age; to include overage dependent children in the list of designated beneficiaries; and to allow TPP contributions to purchase past service in private schools in Newfoundland and Labrador as pensionable service under the TPP.
- The NLTA will request an amendment to legislation/regulations that would remove the limit of 65 days for retired teachers only in circumstances where no non-retired substitute teacher capable of filling the position is available.
- The NLTA representatives on the Pensions Administration Committee will be given the authority to agree to the Pensions Division request to allow the use of commuted value under the Teachers' Pension Plan as the basis for the option of lump sum payouts in the event of pre-retirement death and/or marital breakdown.
- The NLTA will provide a contribution to the Canada-Wide Science Fair to assist

with printing costs.

- The NLTA will indicate its willingness to promote the Law Enforcement Torch Run through a "jeans day" among school staffs with promotional materials provided by the organizers of the Torch Run. For further information contact Fred Douglas, President, or Edward Hancock, Executive Director.

FINANCE AND PROPERTY

- In the event of a strike, strike pay will be set at $150 per week per teacher plus $37.50 per week for dependent spouse and/or child.
- The present system of substitute teachers having to teach 20 days in the school year in order to qualify for strike assistance will remain the same.
- Any retired teacher who is in receipt of a teacher's pension and currently teaching will not receive strike pay in the event that a strike should occur. For further information contact Ed Moore, Chair, Finance and Property Committee, or Jim Fox, NLTA Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS AND SERVICES

- The committee will conduct a re-examination of branch boundaries in light of new school district boundaries, declining teacher numbers and other pertinent factors.
  For further information contact Winston Carter, Chair, Membership Benefits and Services Committee, or Stefanie Tuff, Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Virtual Teacher Centre
A presentation was made to Provincial Executive by Alex Hickey, Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre concerning the external evaluation report recently received. The evaluation was conducted by North Atlantic TeleLearning Associates and provides a background to the establishment of the VTC and its subsequent successes. The report also examines challenges and sustainability questions for the VTC. Future directions and recommendations include implications for the NLTA, Department of Education, School Districts and the MUN Faculty of Education.

For further information contact Alex Hickey, Coordinator, Virtual Teacher Centre.

President's Report
The President updated the Provincial Executive on his activities since the February meeting. Besides school visits and various meetings in his role as President, he has also attended the opening ceremonies for Education Week, various meetings of the SAC regionals throughout the province, as well as various news conferences and meetings regarding the NAPE/CUPE job action.

The President has been very active in the media on the announcements in the Provincial Budget of cuts to teacher allocations and the reduction in the number of school districts. As well, he has reiterated the NLTA's position regarding the strike by school support staff.

For further information contact Fred Douglas, President.

Public Sector Strike
The NLTA has supported the efforts of NAPE and CUPE throughout its ordeal with government, beginning with an advertising campaign several months ago to most recent events of the President sitting on the "Solidarity Committee" set up by the Federation of Labour. The NLTA has been represented at all news conferences, meetings, rallies, and

has responded in the media whenever possible.

The NLTA has received correspondence from NAPE and CUPE expressing appreciation for our response to the issue of teachers doing the work of student assistants. The Benefits and Economic Services Division has been extremely busy responding to and monitoring developments in individual schools regarding student assistant duties.

For further information contact Fred Douglas, President, or Edward Hancock, Executive Director.

Discussion Topics
The following topics were reviewed by Provincial Executive for follow up or future discussion: First Steps; Provincial Wellness Strategy; consolidation of school districts; and reports regarding distance learning.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Provincial Executive is scheduled for June 11 and 12 in St. John's. For further information contact Fred Douglas, President, or Edward Hancock, Executive Director.